



September 1942 — Relocated Japanese Americans arrive at Topaz. Utah State Historical Society collections, courtesy Leonard J. Arrington.

JAPANESE: FROM SETBACK TO SUCCESS

In the face of similarly adverse conditions, another minority group, the Japanese, has played the dominant role in its development. The census of 1890 showed 4 Japanese in Utah, all male laborers. Within the next ten years the Japanese population increased to 417, of which only 11 were females. Most of this total were farm laborers and railroad hands working on section gangs. A few worked in the mines. This population gradually increased more than fivefold, so that by 1910 there were 2,110 Japanese Americans in the state. These people resided primarily in the Salt Lake Valley where they worked as farm laborers and farmers on a rental or share-crop basis. The population continued to grow gradually into the 1930s.²³

During the 1920s, many of the Issei (first generation Japanese Americans) worked in the mines within the state. At Bingham Canyon, eight hundred worked in the world's largest open pit copper mine, and in central Utah, centered around the town of Helper, approximately a thousand Issei mined coal. They worked also in the smelters at Garfield, Tooele, and Magna. Issei contributed greatly to the truck gardening of Box Elder, Davis, Weber, and Salt Lake counties. Celery and tomato culture in particular are indebted to the industriousness of the early Japanese. The sugar beet industry also depended on Japanese labor.²⁴ *—Gover*

²² Smith, "The 'Japanese' in Utah," 134.

²³ *Ibid.*, 140; Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York, 1969), 74.
